InRealLife

A Feature Length Romantic Comedy

Navigating Relationships Through Technology… In Real Life

2017 Telefilm Micro-Budget Production Application

DIRECTOR'S VISION

We meet romantic partners and friends through dating sites, we keep up with family and friends through email, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram. Technology is constantly changing, connecting humans in a very intimate way while at the same time driving us further and further apart.

In addition to exploring how technology factors into our everyday relationships, *In Real Life* explores nature versus nurture and fighting against type. Charlie and Adam are clearly mismatched but appearances can be deceiving. We see that Charlie's family, who by all accounts have everything they could possibly want, but lack true connection and respect for not only themselves but for others. Adam's family is a hyper-stereotyped reflection of the highly ambitious successful Jewish family that is loud and totally overbearing and who are so competitive with one another, that no one ends up hearing anything. Both Charlie and Adam just need calm to find their own paths. But how does one find calm and silence in a world that is nattered with buzzes, notifications dinging all over the place, and a constant bombardment of expectations.

Why?

My film, *In Real Life,* is about being disconnected in a connected world. Globally, we are reliant on technology for our news, banking, communication, shopping. Most of my relationships happen online, whether it is friends, acquaintances, would-be lovers or family. It used to be, even within the past decade, in order to get together to have a few beverages with a friend at the local pub, I would make the call on a landline to make plans. And I would stick to them because there wasn't a way to let my friend know if something else came up. There used to be more stakes involved, I had to show up in person, lest I be criticized for being flaky. People communicate these days almost strictly through online channels. I even text my husband when we are on different floors of the house. Navigating romantic relationships through technology is incredibly frustrating and weird, especially for those of us who are a certain age. It makes me mental when someone doesn't respond back to

me, and then I jump into the rabbit hole of what if's, and why how's. I tease my spouse, I daresay threaten, that we can never split because I won't know what to do with myself if I ever had to jump into the dating world again. *In Real Life* is my re-imagining of what my dating life might look like if I had to do it all over again. How would I deal with the weird frustrations of dating online without going completely insane? By having a sense of humor. And I know many people who stumble through that world on a daily basis. Hence, this is why *In Real Life* is an important and yet fun commentary on finding love and connection in today's day and age.

Feel, Setting

The setting is urban. Over the past few years, I have realized I cannot tell a story that is not my own in some form. I am an indoor cat, which is interesting given I live in Southern Alberta in the prairies/foothills with some of the most glorious and excruciatingly beautiful landscape. As connected to the prairies as I am, I enjoy experiencing this beauty from behind a glass of some kind, like a car window or a window in a building. I equate these windows to the lens of a camera, because that is often how I see the world, how I process the world. This film will capture real life through mostly subjective camera angles, and medium to close up shots to capture the actor's performances and emotions. ECU will be reserved for the 6 main characters who end the film. The reason we won't use the ECU with any of the other characters is because we want the audience to be connected to and invested in what happens with Charlie, Adam, Jason, Steve, Rami and Tovah. We will use high angle shots to show the vulnerability in specific scenes. For the big club scene, we will mostly use a bird's eye view angle cut with MCUs and POVs to engage the audience as if they are in the room, as if they are a player in the scene. The POVs will illustrate the intimate nature of the stakes that are being challenged in this very important scene.

Technical

Because of the small budget for the scope of this project, our camera package will be smaller. This will enable us to change our camera set-up's a little quicker and enable us to work in smaller spaces. Kara Artym, who will be our Director of Photography, already has the camera and lenses we will need. Kara purchased the Sony FS5 which we recently used in filming a documentary in the US, and the footage of which is beautiful. For a small camera it packs a huge punch and enables a lot of flexibility. Kara is an excellent camera person with a keen creative eye and will work closely with Phil Bowen, another Director of Photography in Calgary, to bring my vision onto the big screen.

Inspiration

The idea for *In Real Life* came about when one of my best friends met her now spouse online. It was at a time when online dating was just beginning to be the way folks met their partners. Many friends had crazy stories about online dating and I thought this would be a hilarious story to tell on film. John Hughes' films of the 80s, such as *Sixteen Candles* and

Pretty in Pink and *The Breakfast Club* are films that have not only stood the test of time, but are the films that I grew up with. So it is only natural that as I am embarking on directing my first full length feature film, I tend to look back to those films. Character, story arc/plot, and music are the things drive me in life and will drive this film. Every layer has its own story.

Themes

The biggest theme in the film is connection, and the reliance upon technology to connect with other humans. As a society, we have never before been so connected, and yet we are also so disconnected from ourselves and others. Technology is the agent that disrupts and agitates the action in the film. More than likely, you are woken up each morning by the alarm on your cellphone. I know the first thing I do each morning, is (in this order) snooze my cellphone alarm, check facebook to see if I have any notifications, check my twitter unfollower app to see how many new followers and how many unfollowed me since I last checked, then I check Instagram. Then I go back to my actual Twitter app and check for notifications and messages. I likely go back to Facebook and scroll through, reading headlines, checking on specific friends' walls. Then I will check my email. This is all before I get out of bed. It takes about 30-45 minutes depending on the news day.

In this film, the two main characters, Charlie and Adam, live life connected to their jobs, colleagues, friends and family through these technological devices. However, when they meet in real life for the first time, it is actually by coincidence rather than a predetermined set-up arranged through the online dating website they are both engaged with.

Family is the secondary theme in my film, In Real Life. How people connect, or don't, to the relationships that we don't choose presents in the film in how Charlie and Adam engage with their families. Charlie engages with her family through conditioned normative behaviors. They follow the playbook of society's expectations to seek the perfect life with all the luxuries and privilege one can be afforded. But having the perfect life doesn't necessarily bring happiness. Charlie's family members are either flagrant philanderers, or completely absent in the moment. Similarly, Adam's family is overly connected into each other's lives, in gossipy, overbearing busy-bodiness, however, nobody actually hears anybody else, because everyone is talking (loudly) about their own selves and desires.

Identity, and how our identity can be complicated by assuming subjective stereotypes in place of understanding, is also a major theme. Jason serves as the flagrant, easy loving, hypersexualized personification of hedonistic nihilism. He is the character who points out the dark, depraved nature of how dating online can get very intimate and unsolicited, very quickly and very easily. In the end, he too seems to have finally found someone to connect with in Rami, who being young and growing up in a post-technology world, is curious about how to interact with people in real life.

The person who emerges in the film as the steadfast moral compass of the story is Steve. At first he seems to be a disconnected stoner, who would be often overlooked as going nowhere in life, but in the end he is the one who serves as the voice of reason as he is the only person who truly gets how disconnected we are. He talks a big game about not buying into society's expectations in that one can only find happiness in having a family and a heterosexual partner, and is more seemingly connected to technology as his preference, but he is the one who actually realizes how inane and unhealthy connection through technology has become and calls it.

Colour

I will use Colour to denote the growth and psychology of the characters. When we are first introduced to Charlie we see that she is dressed in a lighter blue to denote her contentment with life, which is the same blue of the Tiffany's bag that Adam brings into his home prior to his break-up. In the scene where she tells Jason about the betrayal she is dressed in a darker, gloomier navy blue with flashes of red to denote her anger and betrayal. Similar to Adam, when he talks about online dating to Steve, he is dressed in gloomier tones.

When Charlie and Adam meet at the bar she is dressed in a more hopeful and playful yellow and pink outfit to denote her optimism we will have Adam in a transitory color of yellow and blue to denote his depression in the darker blue, but the yellow is his unconscious optimism.

Basically we will mirror Charlie and Adam in their color palettes to show that they are going through a similar thing and yet the foundation color for both of them is rooted in who they are as individuals.

The growth and transition of the characters will also be denoted in color. Steve, for example, will largely remain the same as he is the moral ground. So he will be in varying tones and hues of green to denote his stability and unchanging self-awareness.

Charlie – Ambition/Hope (Diane from *Say Anything*) Blue/Teal, Yellow (Foundation Color),
Adam - Success/Stability (Doug Guggenheim from *House of Lies*) Blue/Teal, Green, Brown (Foundation Color)
Steve – Morality/Self-Awareness (Dude from *The Big Lebowski*) Green throughout
Jason - Hedonism (Aldous Snow from *Get Him to the Greek*) Orange, Pinks
Elizabeth - Entitlement (Regina from *Mean Girls*) Black
Rachel – Perfection/Ambition (Charlotte from *Sex & the City*) Silver, Black, Purple
Tovah - Rebellion/Innocence (Ferris from *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*) - White (Foundation Color), Pink

Audio

That brings me to music. Music is a huge part of the film. Like many John Hughes films of the 80s, the lyrics and music tells its own layer of story in the film. I am well ensconced in the music scene in Calgary having been a publicist for the Calgary folk festival for 7 years, a radio programmer and an event coordinator for the JUNOS, as such I have many contacts in the music industry locally, nationally and internationally. To this end I have secured use of music in the film from artists such as Tal M. Klein, Danny Vacon, The Shiverettes, Cowpuncher, Sabo Forte and Astral Swans. As well, I have engaged Kat Dornian, the former music director at CJSW to be the Music Score Supervisor. Kat was responsible for several compilation album projects which included the licensing of songs, she is a DJ of her own note, and her spouse is also a music composer and wrote one of my all-time favorite songs.

Marketing opportunities around the soundtrack aspect include utilizing established audiences of these bands which have an international reach and are beyond the target market for the film itself. This particular marketing aspect is about connecting arts communities and reaching out to promote all parties to their respective audiences. For example, we hope to pull some of these musicians' audiences into the film world, and vice versa. This is will be done largely via social media and traditional promotion avenues.

Conclusion
In Real Life, intends to be entertainment first and foremost, but with the underlying message that as humans we need to slow down, take a breath and truly engage with each other face to face. In real life.